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STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

THE VITA CHRISTI OF LUDOLPH OF SAXONY AND
ITS INFLUENCE ON THE *SPIRITUAL EXERCISES*
OF IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

PAUL SHORE

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A group of Jesuits appointed from their provinces in the United States.

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Paul Shore

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1548—1998



The four-hundred-and-fiftieth
anniversary of

- ▶ The official papal approval of
the Spiritual Exercises
- ▶ The first printing of the
Spiritual Exercises
- ▶ The opening at Messina in
Sicily of the first Jesuit
school founded specifically
for lay students

For your information . . .

On July 31, 1548, four hundred and fifty years ago this year, Pope Paul III, by means of his letter *Pastoralis officii cura*, bestowed his formal approval upon the *Spiritual Exercises*. St. Ignatius thus saw one of the great desires of his life fulfilled. Twenty-six years had elapsed since 1522, when he had first begun to write down in a notebook details of his experiences of prayer and his reflections thereon. Between 1528 and 1535 those texts received additions and subtractions that transformed them from Ignatius's personal notebook to a book available for use by others. By 1541 the text had been completed. After the papal approval seven years later, Ignatius never changed a word of it. In that same year, on September 11, 1548, the first printed text of the *Exercises* appeared in Rome. Francis Borgia, officially still duke of Gandía and secretly a Jesuit since February of that year, paid for the printing.

This anniversary is one of the reasons that we begin the 1998 volume of STUDIES with an essay by Paul Shore on Ludolph of Saxony's *Vita Christi* and its influence on the *Spiritual Exercises*. But, of course, more than the anniversary makes the essay important. All Jesuits know from reading Ignatius's autobiography that he had read Ludolph's work. But probably few Jesuits know much about the book itself or about its author. This present issue of STUDIES will, I hope, provide the beginning of such knowledge. The present issue is also special in another respect. Earlier numbers of STUDIES included as authors laymen or laywomen and religious women, but this is the first one to have been written by someone who is neither a Jesuit nor a Roman Catholic. Dr. Shore is associate professor in the Institute for Leadership and Public Service at Saint Louis University. In addition to his other works, he has in recent years done research and has written on the Jesuits in Bohemia in the years before the suppression of the Society. In the course of his research in state libraries in the Czech republic, he unearthed archival material on the Society that had gone unexamined for two hundred and more years. He wrote the first version of the present essay as a member of the "Ricci Seminar" here at the university.

The Ricci Seminar comprised two groups of eight to ten faculty members at Saint Louis University—laymen and laywomen and other religious, Catholic and non-Catholic, long-time members of the faculty and recent arrivals—who spent a semester together with Fr. Joseph Tetlow the first year and Fr. David Fleming the second year, studying and discussing Jesuit history and Jesuit spirituality. I myself also participated in both groups. Each member contributed to the Seminar in the context of his or her own academic specialty and experience. Each wrote a paper that served as a subject of discussion for the group. The Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality became interested in Dr. Shore's paper, and after our usual discussions among ourselves and with the author, we decided to publish it as the January issue of STUDIES.

Yet another important Jesuit apostolate celebrates a four-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary in this year of 1998. In 1548, in the city of Messina in Sicily, the

first Jesuit school founded specifically for lay students opened its doors. In 1547, as he sent to Messina ten of the very best members of what was still a very small Society of Jesus, Ignatius said that if he and they lived ten years, they would see great things in the Society. When Ignatius died nine years later in 1556, forty Jesuit schools already existed. The thousands of such schools that came into being and served the Church and the world and the Society of Jesus over those four and a half centuries, and the more than twelve hundred such institutions that exist in a variety of forms today all descend from the Society's decision in 1548 to engage in that apostolate. That decision has helped to shape education throughout the world, and it helped shape the Society of Jesus, too, to be what it has been and is today. I hope that Jesuit schools everywhere celebrate that anniversary this year. Happy Birthday to them all!

Young people make up the majority of men and women served by Jesuit schools. They have been the subjects of far more reflection and writing than could ever even be summarized here. But an outstanding issue of *Supplement to The Way* (no. 90, autumn 1997), entitled "The Spirituality of Young People," just appeared. Anyone engaged in working with young people might well find it very profitable reading. The first of its eleven articles bears the title "The Adolescence of Jesus and Growing Up in Christ." The issue includes three articles from the United States, among them two by the American Jesuits James Di Giacomo and William O'Malley, both already known for their excellent writing and lecturing on adolescents and young adults, as well as on other subjects. The whole *Supplement* (*The Way*, Heythrop College, Kensington Square, London, W8-5HQ, England) is well worth reading and pondering.

Oh yes, another 1998 anniversary—Jesuits getting into trouble by "telling it as it is" in the course of their preaching. We have been doing that, too, for four hundred and fifty years. In 1548 Nicolás Bobadilla, one of the first companions, got into such trouble with Charles V, ruler of the Holy Roman Empire. (Nothing like starting at the top!) The Emperor had promulgated the "Interim," an attempt at obtaining at least a temporary peace between Catholics and Lutherans regarding their teachings until a more permanent settlement could be arranged. Neither side liked the "Interim" and Bobadilla was strongly opposed to it. So he spoke vehemently against it. As a result, the Emperor ordered him out of Augsburg and effectively out of the Empire. When Bobadilla arrived back in Rome, Ignatius, who knew how much the work of the new Society, still under suspicion, depended upon goodwill, received the fiery orator quite coldly.

*John W. Padberg, S.J.
Editor*

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THE *VITA CHRISTI* OF LUDOLPH OF SAXONY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE *SPIRITUAL EXERCISES* OF IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

Ignatius and Ludolph: Similarities, Differences, Connections

The *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola is a complex work reflecting and influenced by many sources, ranging from the personal insights accorded their author to the commonly received symbolism and iconography of the century in which they were written. By Ignatius's own admission, while composing his most influential work he was profoundly influenced by several devotional writings that he first encountered while convalescing from the injuries he received at the battle of Pamplona.¹ Among these works was the *Vita Jesu Christi* of Ludolph of Saxony, a book that is virtually unknown today. This essay will examine the *Vita* as a teaching document, studying some of its imagery and theology and placing it

This paper was written with the support of the Marchetti Jesuit Endowment of Saint Louis University. The writer wishes to thank Fr. Joseph Tetlow, S.J., and Philip Gavitt for their helpful suggestions concerning this paper. He also gratefully acknowledges the editorial assistance of the members of the Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality. As a non-Jesuit, the writer hopes that the issues raised in this essay will help stimulate further dialogue between Jesuit and non-Jesuit scholars studying the writings of Ignatius.

¹ Whether Ignatius read these works silently or aloud or whether they were read to him is not made clear in the saint's "autobiography." The way in which the *Vita Christi* was communicated to Ignatius is of great significance, because the work itself was intended to be encountered orally. Additional source criticism of the *Spiritual Exercises* will help scholars understand better the role of orality in the creation of this text.

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in its historical and cultural context. It will attempt, moreover, to identify the exact nature of its influence on the composition of the *Spiritual Exercises*.

Unlike Ignatius himself, who left behind thousands of letters, an "autobiography," eyewitness recollections of his associates, and a religious order that has studied and venerated his teachings, Ludolph of Saxony is a less distinct figure. Ludolph, who was also known as Ludolphus Alemanus (the German) or Rudolph, was born sometime between 1295 and 1300. Of his birthplace, youth, and early education nothing is known, nor is it certain at which university he received the degree of Master of Theology. Grown to adulthood, he was well known to the general public and preached numerous sermons, but was never identified with the new universities appearing north of the Alps during his lifetime. He joined the Dominican order as a youth, but in his forties he received permission to become a Carthusian because, as he declared, he felt a calling to a stricter life of silence and solitude.² After entering the order, he lived in the charterhouse of Strasbourg, and later he served as prior in Coblenz from 1343 until 1348. He appears to have passed the last year of his life in Mainz as a simple monk in a cell. The date of the composition of the *Vita Christi* cannot be established with certainty, although it seems likely that it was composed after Ludolph had entered the Carthusians. Ludolph died on April 10, 1377, or, as some authorities assert, the year following. Even at the time of his death, Ludolph had earned a great reputation for holiness, and later commentators on his work regarded him as a "vir Deo deditissimus atque doctissimus."

In the late Middle Ages, he was well enough known as an author to have a number of religious works falsely attributed to him, but his entire fame, such as it is, rests upon his *Vita Christi*. In addition to its acknowledged impact on Ignatius, this book had a direct influence upon the fifteenth-century *devotio moderna* movement and on the later spiritual movements associated with the Carmelites and with Francis de Sales.

Ludolph the man and writer differed from Ignatius in some noteworthy ways. The world of Ignatius was exploding geographically throughout his life. Born the year before Columbus made his first voyage, Ignatius lived to see the West's knowledge of the Americas, the Pacific, and the Far East increase almost beyond belief. Even though Ignatius passed the latter part of his life in Rome, he shared the wanderlust of his time and spent some of his earlier years in Paris, Barcelona, and Jerusalem. Ignatius corresponded with men and women in all parts of the known world and was keenly interested in the cultures of far-off lands. As an administrator,

² Sister Mary Immaculate Bodenstedt, S.N.D., *The Vita Christi of Ludolphus the Carthusian* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1944), 1-10.

Ignatius also understood and made skillful use of the increasingly centralized, aristocratic governments of Spain and Portugal, which utilized emerging technologies to manage their affairs. Persistent and sometimes headstrong, Ignatius never ceased to act the Basque aristocrat. At the same time, he possessed in good measure an adaptability, a willingness to be proactive, and an awareness of the diversity and potential for change present in the world, and he shared the sense of adventure and innovation typical of the High Renaissance.

In sharp contrast, Ludolph was, as far as historians can determine, quiet, conservative, and, to use a modern term, strictly Eurocentric. He was a central European who, although he did travel a great deal by the standards of his day, apparently did not move in the circles of power and evinced no interest in the world beyond the part of Christendom familiar to him. He lived his whole life within the Holy Roman Empire, which, perennially riven as it was by struggles over its throne, could barely function as an administrative unit during much of the late Middle Ages.³ Coupled with this relative degree of parochialism is Ludolph's decision to enter the Carthusian Order at a comparatively advanced age. The Carthusians, founded by St. Bruno at the close of the eleventh century, have always been a completely contemplative order. The silence, solitude, and austerity of the order is legendary.⁴ While a significant number of Carthusians have made contributions to literature, the order does not stress teaching or social outreach. In view of this, we are astounded by Ludolph's literary output, its scope, and the wide range of individuals it sought to reach. Among those works surviving are commentaries on Peter Lombard, glosses on Scripture, a collection of his sermons, and a treatise on how to live the spiritual life.⁵ But none of these can fairly be called revolutionary or daring in form or intention.

A student of the milieus in which Ludolph and Ignatius lived and wrote notes the significant difference between the older communal society prevailing in the fourteenth century on the one hand and, on the other, the culture of civility and the separation between the public and the private lives that was developing in Ignatius's day.⁶ While both the *Vita Christi* and the *Spiritual Exercises* were intended as vehicles for private meditation and

³ See W. T. Waugh, "Germany (B)," in *The Cambridge Medieval History* (New York: MacMillan, 1932), 7:104ff.

⁴ See Tudor Edwards, *Worlds Apart* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1958), 21–23.

⁵ Walter Baier, "Ludolphe de Saxe," in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, ed. M. Viller et al. (Paris: Beauchesme, 1976), 9:1131–33.

⁶ See Marvin Becker, *Civility and Society in Western Europe, 1300–1600* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 1–83.

reflection in a world of dynamic change, Ludolph's work reflects the world of pilgrimage, public rite, and ritual that its author and contemporary audiences knew so well. By the time Ignatius the convalescent began to read (in private, to be sure) the *Vita Christi*, the Western European family was becoming more privatized, loyalties were increasingly centered on the state rather than on a local liege lord, and the first rumblings of the far-off Protestant Reformation were a harbinger of the continuing tendency in many quarters towards private piety. Although these trends had only begun to make themselves known in the remote corner of the Spanish king's dominion in which Ignatius was then living, they would come to dominate the religious and political life of Europe during the remainder of his life. They would also have a considerable impact on the men and women for whom the *Spiritual Exercises* was intended.

Surrounded by the horrors of the Black Death (which carried off many Carthusians), the decline of higher medieval culture, and the scandal of the Babylonian Captivity, Ludolph might therefore be seen as a product of an age far more confined and traditional in its thinking than was the age of Ignatius.⁷ Ludolph's personal experiences, ambitions, and desires were far different from those of either the courtier or the pilgrim Ignatius. Yet beyond these relatively superficial differences, some profound connections between the two men can be discerned. Both viewed their encounter with Christ as a personal experience, one that directly affected the individual

without contradicting or superseding the sacraments of the institutional Church that was so sacred to both of them. Both saw solitary, sincerely felt prayer as a crucial means of establishing contact with God. And both recognized the importance of communicating their understanding of the divine through means easily understood by persons of all backgrounds. While still a

Some profound connections between the two men can be discerned.

pilgrim, Ignatius wished "to converse on spiritual matters with anyone whom he met," and later went on to design the *Spiritual Exercises* to accommodate and be of benefit to both illiterate peasants and university scholars.

⁷ The Babylonian Captivity was a period during the fourteenth century when the papacy was located in Avignon. The prestige of the Holy See plummeted, and the freedom of action of the popes was greatly reduced. See C. Warren Hollister, *Medieval Europe: A Short History*, 7th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994), 235f. For evidence of technological stagnation and social upheaval, see David Herlihy, "Ecological Conditions and Demographic Change," in *One Thousand Years: Western Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. Richard L. DeMolen (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), 32.

Ludolph composed his monumental *Vita* (the text runs to 777 pages of fine print in a nineteenth-century edition) for the edification of people from all walks of life. Ludolph presents his account of the life of Christ with the maximum degree of learned documentation available in his day, whereas Ignatius offers his *Spiritual Exercises* from a much more personal and even subjective point of view; still, both works have a similar goal, to bring the reader or exercitant into a closer relationship with the love and mercy of God as manifested in his Son.

Importance, Structure, and Techniques of the *Vita*

It is not surprising that Ignatius, bedridden for many months in northern Spain during the years 1521 and 1522, would have been given Ludolph's *Vita* to read. No fewer than eighty-eight printed editions of the *Vita* in seven European languages appeared in the two centuries following its composition; it was one of the most widely read devotional works in the fifteenth century. Moreover, it was only to be expected that a devotional book steeped in the piety which had been widely accepted for a century or more would survive as a popular favorite in what has been described as a cultural "backwater," the Basque territories of the Spanish Habsburgs. In his memoirs, Ignatius recalled his first encounter with the book:

And as he was much given to reading worldly books of fiction, commonly labeled chivalry, on feeling well he asked to be given some of them to pass the time. But in that house none of those that he usually read could be found so they gave him a Life of Christ and a book of the lives of the saints in Castilian.⁸

The coupling of the *Vita* in Ignatius's recollection with medieval tales of knighthood is significant. Both chivalric tales popular in late-medieval Spain and Ludolph's work were available in the vernacular; and both make vivid and detailed use of themes familiar to readers since childhood,

⁸ Parmananda R. Divarkar, S.J., trans., *A Pilgrim's Testament: The Memoirs of Saint Ignatius of Loyola* (Saint Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1995), 7. The book of lives of the saints was the *Flos sanctorum*, an abridgment of the *Legenda aurea* or, more correctly, the *Legenda sanctorum*, written by the thirteenth-century Dominican Jacobus de Voragine (Jacopo da Varazze), who died in 1298. The *Legenda*, like the *Vita Christi*, was widely read; among its admirers was Teresa of Avila. See Cándido de Dalmases, S.J., *Ignatius of Loyola, Founder of the Jesuits: His Life and Work* (Saint Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1985), 43. For the relationship of Voragine to the understanding of Rome's civilizing mission in the High Middle Ages, see Robert Folz, *The Concept of Empire in Western Europe from the Fifth to the Fourteenth Century*, trans. Sheila Ann Ogilive (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 146f.

holding their interest by appealing to the emotions. Both the chivalric tale and the *Vita*, moreover, have at their core a “hero” whose experiences any reader can readily comprehend and internalize. While this may seem a very superficial reading of the *Vita*, we should remember that it was from this perspective that Ignatius the courtier and erstwhile soldier initially approached Ludolph’s work. Similarly, when Ignatius read Voragine’s *Flos sanctorum*, another of the books he encountered during his convalescence, he interpreted the holiness of the saints described there as analogous to chivalric attainments, and wanted to enter the lists of holiness in competition with SS. Dominic, Francis, and others.

While this brief study cannot pretend to treat the *Vita Christi* in any exhaustive way, we must devote some attention to the organization of the work as a whole. The meditations of the *Vita Christi* can be divided into three categories: *lectio*, *meditatio*, and *oratio*. In the story of the Passion, a *conformatio* precedes the *oratio*. The reader first encounters the narrative (*lectio*), in which the incidents of Christ’s life are related; then he is called upon to meditate upon the significance of these events. Here the similarity to the *Spiritual Exercises* is apparent. Walter Baier writes thus:

The aim of the meditations is to renew the image of God that has been obscured in the man: renewing of the memory (*memoria*) through recollection (*recordatio*), renewing of knowledge through wisdom, and renewing of the will through love.⁹

The *Vita* was widely read in both its original Latin and in various vernaculars: Ignatius read the *Vita Jesu* in the Castilian translation made a few decades earlier by the Franciscan Ambrosio Montesino.¹⁰ Translations into Portuguese and Catalan were also available in Ignatius’s day.¹¹ The book’s widespread appeal was perhaps traceable in part to a straightforward narrative that provides both an engaging story line and a comprehensible exposition of theology, relying heavily upon patristic as well as scriptural authority. Another factor contributing to the popularity of the *Vita* was Ludolph’s discussion of the easily comprehended sweetness of Christ, which he revealed and still reveals to all who come to him. Ludolph writes: “Good

⁹ “Le but des méditations est de renouveler l’image de Dieu defigurée dans l’homme: renouvellement de la memoire (*memoria*) par le souvenir (*recordatio*), de l’intelligence par la sagesse, de la volonté par l’amour” (Baier, “Ludolph,” 1136).

¹⁰ *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (New York: Charles Scribners’ Sons, 1988), 11:422. The author has been unable to obtain a copy of this translation.

¹¹ Interestingly, the *Vita* does not appear to have been well known in England, and no English translation appeared in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries.

Jesus, how sweet Thou art in the heart of one contemplating Thee, and loving Thee.”¹²

The *Vita* clearly draws much of its material from other devotional works of the day, including the *Meditationes vitæ Christi* of the pseudo-Bonaventure, and the *Lignum vitæ* of St. Bonaventure.¹³ Furthermore, Ludolph also filled his book with thousands of quotations from Augustine, Jerome, Chrysostom, and other Church fathers, as well as innumerable citations from Scripture. Ludolph clearly had no interest in creating an original work of scholarship or theory; in the medieval scholastic tradition, he sought to assemble all that was known about his subject, linking material from his various sources with his own recurring themes of meditation and prayer.

Imagery and Influence of the *Vita* on Ignatius

For Ignatius, however, the *Vita*, despite its dependence on earlier writings, was a new experience, not only conveying details about the earthly life of Christ but also proposing ways of drawing closer to the risen and real Christ that were neither overwhelming nor impractical for the man or woman of affairs.¹⁴ At the beginning of the book, Ludolph writes:

Let [sinners], though, take care not to make their way through this life [of Christ] in a cursory fashion; instead they should absorb a portion of it day by day in an orderly manner. So doing, while daily celebrating a restful sabbath of pious meditation dedicated to Christ and leading their thoughts and affections, their prayers and acts of praise, and their entire day’s work back to this sabbath, let [them] take delight in it.¹⁵

¹² “Jesu bone, quam dulcis es in corde cogitantis de te, et diligentis te” (*Vita Jesu Christi . . . per Ludolphum de Saxonia* [Paris and Rome: Victor Palmé, 1865], Pt. 2, chap. 89, p. 774, col. 1. All Latin citations in this essay are taken from this source, and all translations of the Latin are my own or my editor’s.

¹³ Charles Abbott Conway, Jr., *The Vita Christi of Ludolph of Saxony* (Salzburg: Analecta Cartusiana, 1976), 4.

¹⁴ An important but difficult-to-answer question touches upon the uniqueness of the *Vita Christi* as a catalyst for Ignatius’s spiritual and literary development. Had the invalid first encountered some other work of medieval piety, would his reaction have been the same, or are there characteristics that set the *Vita* apart? The answer must wait for future textual and linguistic study.

¹⁵ “Caveat tamen provide, ne cursorie ipsam vitam legendo transeat, sed seriatim aliquid de ea per diem accipiat: in quo sabbatum dedicatum piæ meditationis Christo quotidie celebrando, ac cogitationes et affectiones, orationes et laudes, totumque opus diei ad illud reducendo, in ipso delectetur” (*Proœmium*, p. 1, col. 1).

This approach of encountering the text “seriatim . . . per diem” gives the reader a chance to assimilate the images and themes of the *Vita* gradually over time, allowing him or her to comprehend the overarching message of the work in stages. The *Spiritual Exercises*, admittedly in a far more intense and personal fashion, performs a similar function for the exercitant. To further the sense of reality of the encounter with Christ, Ludolph provides a physical description of the Lord that delineates his corporeal features in vivid terms:

His face without wrinkle or blemish . . . having a full, youthful beard, his hair matching in color, not long, and parted on his forehead. . . . He sometimes wept, but never laughed. . . . His hands and arms delightful to look upon.¹⁶

This is the Son of God, but it is also an identifiable man whose physical sufferings will be described in great detail later in the *Vita*.¹⁷ As a man he is approachable, and his physical features are described in a familiar way, conveying an almost sensual quality. Emmerich Raitz von Frentz has pointed out that Ludolph was not a stranger to the “application of the senses,” so characteristic of the *Exercises*.¹⁸ While aspects of Christ’s divinity are stressed elsewhere in Ludolph’s work, at the onset the reader is called upon to reflect upon the humanness of Christ, an emphasis in striking contrast to the more austere Christ often portrayed in visual art of the Middle Ages.¹⁹ Moreover, the theme of *imitatio*, in a sense more concrete than that advocated in the *Imitatio Christi*, is also of great importance to

¹⁶ “. . . cum facie sine ruga et macula . . . barbam habens copiosam et impubem, capillis concolorem, non longam, sed in mento bifurcatam. . . . Aliquando flevit, sed nunquam risit. . . . manus et brachia visui delectabilia” (*Proœmium*, p. 5, col. 2).

¹⁷ An interesting parallel with the vividness of Ludolph’s writing can be found in the visual art produced in Germany during this period. Religious art portrays figures with increased realism and often in larger dimensions, fostering direct involvement of the viewer. Individual differentiation and attention to facial expression are also hallmarks of German art of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. See H. Th. Musper, *Gotische Malerei nordlich der Alpen* (Cologne: M. DuMont Schamburg, 1961), especially pp. 65–78. See also note 18 below.

¹⁸ “Ludolphe n’est pas étranger à ‘l’application des sens,’ si particulière aux *Exercises*” (Emmerich Raitz von Frentz, “Ludolphe, le Chartreux, et les *Exercises* de S. Ignace de Loyola,” *Revue d’ascétisme et de mystique* 25 [1949]: 377).

¹⁹ From the thirteenth century on, there was a tendency to portray Christ in a more human fashion, reflecting the general trend in the visual arts to convey human tenderness in religious themes. A particularly striking example of this trend is the “beau Dieu” of Amiens cathedral. See Emile Male, *L’Art religieux du xii au xviii siècle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1961), 114ff.

Ludolph. For Ludolph *imitatio* is reached through recollection of the deeds and experiences of the living Jesus:

Let [the reader] return time and time again to the most memorable things concerned with Christ: his incarnation, birth, circumcision, ministry, presentation in the temple, passion, resurrection, and ascension, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, his appearance on the Day of Judgment.²⁰

Readers, Ludolph asserts, should strive to imagine themselves actually present in all the events described in the *Vita*:

Come and be present at his birth, and his circumcision, like a good foster parent with Joseph. Likewise come with the magi to Bethlehem, and worship the young King with them. . . . Be present at his death with his blessed mother and John and share in their suffering and consolation.²¹

In the *Spiritual Exercises* Ignatius will echo again and again this call to place oneself in the midst of the events described. The call to “imagine,” as articulated in both the *Vita* and the *Spiritual Exercises*, involves far more than simply creating a mental picture of the event or circumstance: it requires powers of concentration and meditation capable of bringing to life the humanly comprehensible incidents in the life of Christ. That Ludolph was successful in helping create the desire in Ignatius to imitate Christ is evident in Ignatius’s own actions in the months and years that followed his first reading of the *Vita*.

In the Spiritual Exercises Ignatius will echo again and again this call to place oneself in the midst of the events described.

It cannot be claimed that Ludolph’s understanding of “fundamentum,” the first word in the *Vita*, drawn as it was from St. Paul and the Vulgate, exactly parallels or even foreshadows what Ignatius meant by this key concept in the *Exercises*. However, we can trace a link between the a priori, unargued claims made by Ludolph for the reality and importance of the *fundamentum* and Ignatius’s later dependence on a foundation for the process he goes on to develop in the *Spiritual*

²⁰ “Sæpius tamen recurrat ad præcipua Christi memoralia, videlicet ad incarnationem, nativitatem, circumcisionem, apparitionem, præsentationem in templo, passionem, resurrectionem, ascensionem, Spiritus sancti effusionem, adventum ad judicium” (*Proæmium*, p. 1, col. 1).

²¹ “Adesto ejus nativitati, et circumcisioni, quasi bonus nutritius, cum Joseph. Vade cum Magis in Bethlehem, et adora cum eis parvulum regem. . . . Adesto morienti cum beata matre ejus, et Joanne, ad compatiendum, et condolendum sibi” (*Proæmium*, p. 2, col. 1).

Exercises. When Ignatius received the illumination on the banks of the Cardoner, as he himself reports, “his understanding began to be opened; not that he saw any vision, but he understood and learned many things, both spiritual matters and matters of faith and of scholarship.”²²

Jerónimo Nadal recalled that Ignatius later told his followers that the fundamental law of all things was opened to him at this time.²³ Here we may draw the parallel between *fundamentum* as comprehended by Ludolph and by Ignatius. The “*fundamentum prædictum*” of Ludolph cannot be entirely expressed in words, but nevertheless it is the source of all that follows in his book and necessary for its understanding. Likewise Ignatius could never adequately express the fundamental insights bestowed upon him, yet they changed his entire view of the cosmos. He sought to elicit these illuminations in others as the *principium et fundamentum* of their own evolving interior lives. This was the intent of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Ludolph, laboring to write a complete and vivid life of the Savior that would place him in the center of our reality, sought something very similar.

The late Middle Ages, during which the *Vita* was composed, was filled with vivid images of the supernatural. The reader of a work such as the *Vita* typically was caught up, not primarily by logic or rhetoric drawing upon abstract argument, but by brilliant concrete allegory. Living in an age when kings were not abstractions but visible and puissant figures, Ludolph, expanding on a line from Ecclesiastes, “Tunc dixit Rex his qui a dextris ejus erunt,” writes:

Then the King will say to those who will be on his right, that is to say, to the good ones; here he does not say, the “Son of man,” as it is written above [in a passage quoted earlier from Chrysostom], but “King,” to whose majesty it is given to rule those under him, to make laws, punish the transgressors of the laws, and reward those who follow them, for in those times he shall appear openly.²⁴

Ignatius draws on a similarly regal metaphor in “The Call of the King.” In this passage from the *Exercises*, we are told to imagine “a human king who has been chosen by God our Lord Himself” and who is “open and

²² *Pilgrim's Testament*, 42.

²³ Cited in Hugo Rahner, S.J., *Spirituality of Saint Ignatius*, trans. Francis John Smith, S.J. (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1953), 98.

²⁴ “... id est bonis: hic non dicit, Filius hominis, sicut supra, sed, *Rex*, ad cuius apicem pertinet subditos regere, leges condere, transgressores legis punire, et observatores præmiare; quod tunc apparebit manifeste” (Pt. 2, chap. 5, p. 565, col. 2). See also Matthew 25:31–46.

noble.”²⁵ In both instances the reader’s imagination is appealed to, and kingly images from the late-medieval world are used to convey the human aspects of religious experience. In the instance cited from both the *Vita* and the *Spiritual Exercises*, a significant number, if not an absolute majority, of the people coming in contact with the ideas were lay persons; hence it is not surprising that frequently the images found in both come from the workaday world. Ludolph especially favored architectural images from the medieval world he knew, as this metaphorical passage concerning the conception of Jesus shows:

We consider that the castle which Jesus enters is a metaphor for the uniquely untainted Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus himself. A castle is said to be any tower surrounded by walls, which defend each other in turn, so that the enemy is kept out of the tower by means of the wall, and away from the wall by means of the tower.²⁶

Pilgrimage as a Theme

The image of life as a pilgrimage was a commonplace in the fourteenth century, when laity and clergy alike entered upon such journeys. Ludolph, like his predecessors, made use of this theme in a particularly engaging passage:

Therefore we who are pilgrims in this world—for we have no permanent city, but we seek one that is to come—if we have within ourselves in a spiritual sense the things that those pilgrims had, the Lord will be a companion on our journey.²⁷

Again, Ludolph describes the process of coming to know the will of God as a journey in which one follows Christ: “The follower of Christ cannot stray or be deceived. Through frequent meditation on his life, the

²⁵ *Spiritual Exercises*, nos. 92, 94. This and the following translations are taken from Joseph A. Tetlow, S.J., *Ignatius Loyola: Spiritual Exercises* (New York: Crossroad, 1992). A case might also be made for Ludolph’s audience associating regal imagery with the imperial vision put forth in Virgil’s *Aeneid*, a work familiar to all educated persons in the High Middle Ages. See Folz, *Concept of Empire*, 146f.

²⁶ “Hoc castellum quod intravit Jesus singulariter intemeratam Virginem, ejusdem Jesu genetricem Mariam, per similitudinem accipimus. Castellum enim dicitur quælibet turris et murus in circuitu ejus; quæ duo sese invicem defendunt, ita ut hostes per murum ab arce, et a muro per arcem arceantur” (Pt. 1, chap. 61, p. 268, col. 1). Conway notes that here Ludolph is quoting Anselm.

²⁷ “Nos ergo qui peregrini in hoc mundo sumus; quia non habemus hic permanentem civitatem, sed futuram inquirimus, si spiritualiter in nobis habemus quæ in se habebant isti peregrini, erit Dominus comes itineris nostri” (Pt. 2, chap. 76, p. 717, col. 2).

heart is set aflame, comes alive, and is illuminated by divine power to imitate or acquire his virtues.”²⁸

Ignatius in his “autobiography” calls himself “the pilgrim”; and the Exercises themselves can be seen as an interior pilgrimage, a structured journey with times of consolation, when the way seems clear, alternating with others of desolation, where the exercitant seems to be in the wilderness. Moments of isolation and reunion follow one another. The completion of the experience of the Exercises is intended to bring about a feeling of fulfillment, while creating the desire to make the journey again or to accompany others on their journey. It is worth noting that the *Spiritual Exercises* was composed at a time when, despite the increased mobility of many Europeans, ever fewer were undertaking pilgrimages. Throughout the sixteenth century, religious and secular wars, economic difficulties, and, perhaps most of all, changing trends in the expression of religious devotion undermined the desire to embark on pilgrimages. Ignatius nevertheless successfully resurrected this metaphor in his own writings and held out to others the possibility that they might experience the transformation and growth usually associated with the pilgrimage, but this time accomplishing it in the solitary form in which he had experienced it through the graduated process of the Exercises.

Forms of Prayer

Not only did Ludolph’s reliance on concrete images drawn from the familiar world make his lengthy and scholarly narrative accessible to Ignatius, but it also suggested the broad range of forms that meditation or reflection might take. By providing the concrete image of the castle (among scores of others) along with an explanation of its significance, Ludolph created a focus for meditation similar to the foci on the life of Jesus that occur repeatedly in the *Spiritual Exercises*.

Throughout the *Exercises* the exercitant is called upon to use recollection both to come to terms with his or her own shortcomings and to call to mind images and associations that clarify and concretize an understanding of God. As we have seen, memory is renewed by recollection, intelligence by wisdom, and willingness through love. Metaphor and symbols assembled by Ludolph also take readers a step further and enable them to grasp other relationships. After narrating the story of Christ walking on the Sea of

²⁸ “Qui ergo Christum sequitur, errare vel falli non potest: ad cuius virtutes imitandas et adipiscendas, ex frequenti meditatione vitæ ipsius cor accenditur et animatur, ac divina virtute illuminatur” (*Proœmium*, p. 4, col. 1).

Galilee towards a boat carrying the disciples, Ludolph offers this interpretation:

That mystic boat is the Church, or whatever faithful soul that is pounded and tossed by the waves of persecution and temptation, now among heretics, now among tyrants, and now among false brothers, while it seeks to reach its heavenly homeland. The contrary wind is a blast from the evil spirits.²⁹

The familiar Christian image of the fisherman's boat is given a somewhat different emphasis, in which the dangers to the vessel are the heresies, tyrannies, and deceits of this world. In a Christendom divided and, in some eyes, disgraced at its highest administrative levels, these dangers were real.

This passage is also an example of Ludolph's Latinity at its best. Although it is far removed from the Ciceronian ideal that would eventually become the Jesuit model, it has other significant strengths. Not only is its imagery vivid, but the use of assonance and alliteration suggests how effectively such passages could be used in preaching. While there is still an appeal to reason, the reader (or listener) is drawn by the balance and music of Ludolph's language. Ludolph, writing a century before the development of the printed book, understood instinctively that in his day the power of language was most effectively expressed through speaking aloud. The fourteenth-century Carthusian could not know that he wrote at the end of a tradition of orality stretching back to Homer and beyond, and that a few centuries later this public orality would be replaced with a more individual and private relation of text to reader. Ludolph perhaps only envisioned that his *Vita* would be used in the monastic context in which he himself lived, where a devotional work such as the *Vita* would daily be read aloud during the evening meal or in other community settings. Later, when the Society of Jesus took up the task of preaching to people who seldom heard a sermon, this auditory quality of language so vital to Ludolph would again become a central feature of the retelling of the life of Christ.

Ludolph also makes it clear what he believes is the function of *meditatio*. This activity is completely integrated with more "cognitive" functions:

For we can meditate, understand, and expound on the divine Scriptures in many ways, however it seems best to us, as long as it is not contrary to the

²⁹ "Mystica navicula ista est Ecclesia, vel quælibet fidelis anima, quæ fluctibus persecutionum et tentationum seculi modo in hæreticis, modo in tyrannis, modo in falsis fratribus tunditur et turbatur, cum ad patriam cœlestem tendere conatur. Ventus contrarius, est malignorum spirituum flatus" (Pt. 1, chap. 69, p. 305, col. 2).

truth of life, or justice, or doctrine; that is to say, not contrary to the faith or to good morals.³⁰

Thus while the purpose of the *Vita* is to call his readers to reflection and meditation on the life of Christ, Ludolph gives them great freedom in how they will undertake this process. Two centuries later Ignatius would also provide choice within a structured framework for those who pursue the *Spiritual Exercises*.

Each chapter of the *Vita* concludes with an *oratio*, or prayer. These prayers are short, especially in comparison with the work as a whole, and typically refer to the specific incidents covered in the preceding reading. Their rhetorical construction is simple and even more suited to oral delivery than is much of the rest of the text. After a chapter dealing with the arrival of Jesus in Nazareth, Ludolph offers the following prayer:

Grant me, good Jesus, this gift, that in imitation of you, I may desire to incline myself to you by all manifestations of humility, and that I may happily show myself ready to do so. Grant also that I may patiently tolerate wrongs done to me and not seek vengeance for them, but may love all my enemies from my heart and show kindnesses to them.³¹

The humility and simplicity of this and many other *orationes* in the *Vita* are mirrored in the instructions for the preparatory prayer in the *Spiritual Exercises*. While the exact wording of this prayer is not specified, Ignatius intended it to be highly personal rather than liturgical in form, and to be a request for guidance and grace through a particular stage of the experience of the Exercises.³² Like Ludolph's *orationes*, with which the reader is constantly confronted, the preparatory prayer is encountered many times in the course of working through the Exercises, becoming a point of reference for the spiritual pilgrim.

³⁰ "Nam circa divinam Scripturam meditari, intelligere, et exponere, multifarie possumus prout credimus expedire, dummodo non sit contra veritatem vitæ, vel justitiæ, aut doctrinæ, id est, non sit contra fidem, vel bonos mores" (*Proœmium*, p. 4, col. 2).

³¹ "[D]a mihi, bone Jesu, hanc gratiam: ut te imitando ad omnia humilitatis obsequia me curvare appetam, et paratum gaudenter exhibeam; da etiam mihi injurias patienter tolerare, et de ipsis vindicatam non querere, omnesque meos adversarios ex corde diligere, et eis beneficia exhibere" (Pt. 1, chap. 65, p. 288).

³² *SpEx*, no. 49.

The Authors' Use of Language

Regarding the language of Ludolph, Raitz von Frentz has pointed out that the word Jesuit itself may have its origins in a passage from the *Vita*:

Likewise the name of Christ is a name of grace, but the name of Jesus is a name of glory. Just as through the grace of baptism Christians are called such by Christ, in heavenly glory it will be Jesus himself who will call us Jesuits, that is, saved by the Savior.³³

We should note instances where the *Vita* appears to convey a view of good works distinctly different from what Ignatius communicated in the *Exercises* and his other writings. Ludolph quotes St. John Chrysostom, who observes: "O most wretched world, and wretched ones who follow after it! For earthly works have always kept humans from life."³⁴ Ignatius indisputably agreed with the necessity of establishing some distance from the cares and distractions of the world, but his rejection of the things of the world does not go so far as to condemn the world completely. In the "Fundamentum" of the *Spiritual Exercises* he wrote: "All other beings on the face of the earth are created for the sake of humankind, to help each person realize the original purpose he is created to achieve."³⁵

The earth is where our pilgrimage takes place, and it is the setting for our moments of revelation that carry us beyond the physical and sensory. As such it is valued by Ignatius who, after moving beyond his period of self-mortification, never again laid excessive stress on total abandonment of the concerns of this world. While the *Exercises* urged exercitants to avoid being distracted by the lures of the material world, they go much further in accommodating those who have worldly responsibilities. Ultimately, the *Spiritual Exercises* is intended for use in a world requiring greater skills of adaptation than Ludolph could have envisioned.

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Christ.*

³³ "Item nomen Christus est nomen gratiæ, sed nomen Jesus est nomen gloriæ. Sicut enim hic per gratiam baptismalem a Christo dicuntur Christiani, sic in cœlesti gloria ab ipso Jesu dicemur Jesuitæ, id est a Salvatore salvati" (Pt. 1, chap. 10, p. 46, col. 2).

³⁴ "O miserrimus mundus, et miseri qui eum sequuntur! Semper enim mundalia opera homines excluderunt a vita" (Pt. 2, chap. 34, p. 516, col. 1).

³⁵ *SpEx*, no. 23.

Ignatius also did not take up the role of fluent exegete so notable in Ludolph. Analyzing Ignatius's account of the Nativity in the *Spiritual Exercises*, Santiago Arzubialde writes:

In contrast with Ludolph's exhaustive exegesis, Ignatius is simple in the extreme, renouncing exegetical development of the verses as well as all patristic commentaries reflecting bookish learning. On principle he renounces all development, theory, or piety that might impede the mystery from speaking for itself.³⁶

The mystery, which is Ignatius's first and overriding concern, draws him away from the massive documentation and exhaustive commentary that Ludolph sees as essential in the reconstruction of Christ's life.

Conclusion

Among the devotional works of the late Middle Ages, the *Vita Christi* of Ludolph of Saxony deserves to occupy a significant place, both because of its stylistic and rhetorical qualities and because of its direct influence on so many subsequent Christian writers. The extensive literature on the *Spiritual Exercises* has devoted scant attention to Ludolph: even a work as pivotal as the *Exercises* has been subjected to relatively little source criticism.³⁷ Undoubtedly members of the Society of Jesus, who saw it as a document to be revered, the product of a unique genius, have brought their own interests and attitudes to bear on the study of the *Exercises* and thus discouraged looking farther afield to understand earlier works that had an impact on it. As an important influence on the thought of Ignatius, Ludolph's *Vita Christi* merits further examination in at least three areas.

First, the *Vita* is replete with a wealth of imagery and set pieces that influenced the receptive Ignatius as he absorbed the meaning of the book. A narrative with dynamic, even theatrical, qualities, the *Vita* presents the life of its subject as an action-filled career and a mission fraught with conse-

³⁶ My translation. In its original form the passage reads, "Frente a la exégesis exhaustiva de Ludolfo, Ignacio es escueto hasta el extremo, renunciando al desarrollo exegético de los versículos e incluso a todos los comentarios patrísticos del saber escolar. Renuncia, por principio, a toda ampliación, teoría o piadosidad que le impida hablar por si mismo al misterio" (Santiago Arzubialde, S.J., *Ejercicios espirituales: Historia y análisis* [Bilbao-Santander: Mensajero-Sal Terrae, 1991], 254).

³⁷ And, as for the *Exercises*, early Jesuit commentators on the work took the attitude that God had practically dictated the book to Ignatius, and this persuasion dampened their willingness to engage in source criticism. Likewise, in more recent times the association of source criticism with Protestant theology continued to discourage the application of modern critical theory to the *Exercises*.

quences for humankind. For the young Ignatius, the would-be knight-errant, as well for many Jesuits who came after him, the call to service embodied in the *Vita* would be decisive. This call is not entirely dissimilar to the appeal to self-sacrifice that has inspired more worldly men to serve a temporal cause. While by no means the most profound aspect of the *Vita*, this appeal to romance (in the original sense of the word) is far from negligible and needs to be factored into any assessment of Ludolph's influence on the development of the Jesuits.

On a deeper level, Ludolph's theology and, in particular, his ecclesiology reveal a serene steadfastness in a time of adversity and controversy that echoes the *sentire cum ecclesia* expressed in the *Spiritual Exercises*. Even though the *Exercises* took shape in an atmosphere that, despite the efforts of Ignatius, became more confrontational in response to other interpretations of the Gospel, Ignatius's own attention was in no way focused on dissent and heresy. The assumptions made by Ludolph concerning the immutability of the truth expressed by the Church find their counterpart in Ignatius's writings. Yet the *Vita* does not engage in polemics or in straw-man attacks against supposed enemies of the revealed truth and the Church.

Likewise, while the *Spiritual Exercises* clearly identifies Satan and his devils as enemies of the truth, it also mirrors Ludolph's preference to concentrate attention on the relation of God to humans rather than on the distance between God and his children. It is worth recalling that the *Spiritual Exercises* was not intended as a weapon in the Counter-Reformation struggle against Protestantism. Both works are entirely nonconfrontational, despite their respective origins in climates of conflict.

Ludolph's *Vita Christi* originated in a world whose values and suppositions differed greatly from the environment in which the Jesuits reached maturity as educators and "helpers of souls." Later events have made it difficult to see the connection between the worldwide activities of the Jesuits and this important influence on one of their founding documents. As the Society of Jesus in the late twentieth century seeks to rediscover its pre-Counter-Reformation roots, it could profit from a further investigation into and a new appreciation of the contributions of this late-medieval writer to the emerging spirituality of Ignatius.



Appendix

Selected Passages from the *Vita Christi*

Introduction

The *Vita Christi* consists of an Introduction (*Proœmium*) and 182 chapters unequal in length. These chapters, grouped into two parts, essentially follow the gospel narrative, with some additional elaborations, such as chapter 10 of Part 1, which adds the circumcision of John the Baptist to the story of his birth. The last chapter of the *Vita*, chapter 89 of Part 2, closes with a poem of forty-eight quatrains dedicated to Christ. Several of the subjects of the chapters of the *Vita* are echoed in the contemplations found in the *Spiritual Exercises*; these include the Nativity (Pt. 1, chap. 9), the Last Supper (Pt. 2, chap. 57), and the Appearance to Mary (Pt. 2, chap. 72).

The following excerpts from the *Vita Christi* provide examples of the Latinity of Ludolph and reflect his views regarding women, the Jews, and other topics. These passages, which are significantly longer than those appearing in the body of the preceding essay, have been selected because they illustrate the author's narrative style rather than because they are closely related to any specific passages in the *Spiritual Exercises*. The selections also demonstrate Ludolph's skill in vividly depicting an event and bringing to life a dramatic moment fraught with human emotion as well as religious significance.

Note the relatively short phrases set off from the main clauses of sentences, and Ludolph's love of the supposedly precise technical term. His extended discursive style, perhaps sometimes tedious for a modern reader, is a product of an era that could devote more time to reading or listening than we can today. Like many other effective preachers, Ludolph is highly skilled at interweaving biblical quotations into his narrative, which add both authenticity and specificity to the picture he is painting and at the same time makes use of phrases already familiar to the reader or listener.

Ludolph's heavy reliance on Church Fathers is, however, another matter, as his audience was much less likely to recognize a line from Jerome or Chrysostom than a citation from the Vulgate. While it is true that Ludolph is seeking to fill out his narrative in truly unsystematic medieval encyclopedic style, he is also striving to create a sort of "conversation" among these Fathers concerning the events described. We must remember that while Ludolph's sense of the reality of the narrative is as keen as any twentieth-century novelist's, his sense of history is utterly unlike our own. Like a medieval painting that may show several events within the same visual frame even though they occurred at different times, the narrative of

the *Vita Christi* is in one sense ahistorical, providing the testimony of "witnesses" who lived centuries after the events described. Steeped in the belief that all of his sources enjoyed divine inspiration, Ludolph can regard these writers as legitimate authorities for his reconstruction of events.

Ludolph's reporting of the behavior of women defies easy categorization, and the first two passages reveal how varied his evaluation of women can be. The first passage, describing the actions of the daughter of Herod (who remains unnamed, as she does in Scripture) is predictably unsparing in its use of invective. By contrast, the account of Mary Magdalene's breaking of the jar of oil is graceful, almost poetic. It seems very likely that women were from the beginning among those who heard the *Vita* read aloud; it was, of course, a woman, the sister-in-law of Ignatius, who brought the book to the future author of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Did Ludolph reflect on how women might react to his portrayal of the female? It is impossible to answer the question definitively, but it is certain that we must set aside modern notions of gender stereotyping when we enter the world that Ludolph has created.

To modern taste, shaped by the poetry of the Romantic era, the unexpected images of Hopkins, and perhaps the sound bite as well, the prayers (*orationes*) that conclude each chapter of the *Vita* may be the most satisfying, although they may not be the most visually arresting. The prayers are brief and contrast sharply with many of the narrative passages they follow. Although many of them share a family resemblance, they cannot be called formulaic and each is distinct. The two prayers quoted here display the pattern of an emotional crescendo situated in the middle of the prayer ("pro Christo, pro fide, pro veritate, pro justitia"; "fac me ibidem caput tuum") that is resolved into a calmer conclusion. The rhetorical relation of the prayers in the *Spiritual Exercises* to the prayers in the *Vita* is itself a complex topic deserving of future study.

In the Latin passages quoted below, direct quotations from Scripture appear in italics; some paragraph divisions are by the translator. In the English version, the scriptural allusions are not set in italics and the translations are my own or my editor's. Again, I have inserted many of the paragraph divisions to add clarity to the text.

Texts

Part 1, Chapter 66: Concerning the Beheading of John the Baptist

(For the original Latin text, see p. 24.)

Afterwards, when the feast of Passover drew near, there followed the passion and death of John the Baptist, resulting from a number of guilty causes. For Herodias feared that Herod might repent of his actions, moved by the preaching of John, and that he would give her back to his brother, with whom it would be dangerous for her to remain. She therefore hatched a plot by which John would be killed without stirring up a rebellion among the people. And Herod knowingly participated in this deception. And so when Herod, the tetrarch, who was sometimes called King, not because he possessed any royal dignity, but because he held the office of ruler, celebrated his birthday in the presence of the princes and leading men of Galilee, the daughter of Herodias danced, that is to say, she executed rhythmic movements, before those present, so that everyone could see her. This was done following the instructions of her mother and Herod. The tetrarch was pleased, when he should have been ashamed at this display on the part of the immodest and wanton daughter, and promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked for.

According to Jerome, Herod perhaps swore the oath so that he would have the opportunity to kill John and to restrain the people from any sort of rebellion, and that he would seem to do the deed unwillingly, although in reality he did it freely. But counseled beforehand by her mother, the daughter asked, for her gift, that the head of John the Baptist be placed in a dish, that is, a small salver. In this place there is a *discus* [or dish], a round vessel, suspended from above. Sometimes a low table is called a *discus*, and sometimes a napkin or a tablecloth is referred to as a *discus*. The animals are said to have appeared to Peter in such a *discus*, which in the Acts of the Apostles is called a linen cloth. Thus Chrysostom: This is the ancient woman Malice who cast Adam out of the delights of Paradise, and who caused heavenly human beings to become earthly. She hurled the human race into hell, and she stole life from the world for the sake of the fruit of one tree; she committed the wrong that leads human beings to death and discovered true travail and oppression. She slays the Baptist on this occasion; she casts aside innocence, dooms youth, and allures and troubles old age.

And the king was very sad, or pretended to be, although he was not so in truth, so that later he would seem compelled to do what in fact he wanted to do all along. Therefore he is called "very sad," that is, seemingly

sad, for according to Bede, he was a dissembler of his own mind; he feigned sadness on his face while holding joy in his heart. He excused the crime by an oath, so that under a cloak of piety he might behave more wickedly. . . .

But John was beheaded, not on the day when the feast of his beheading is celebrated, but around the days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread or Passover of the Jews, in the year before the Passion of Christ; for John had already passed a year in prison. It was necessary that on account of the divine mysteries of the passion and death of Christ, the lesser, John, that is, should yield to the greater, namely, to Christ. So the feast of the beheading of John was moved to another date, to the day when his head was found, or raised up. Therefore, Augustine writes: And what John himself predicted indeed happened to him. For concerning the Lord Jesus Christ he had said, He must grow greater, and I must diminish. John grew smaller through the loss of his head, while the Lord grew greater upon the cross. And thus wrote Gregory: The beheading of John suggests the diminution of his reputation that took place when the people believed in Christ, just as the exaltation of the Savior on the Cross marked an increase in faith. For he whom the multitudes had first considered to be a prophet was acknowledged by all the faithful as the Lord of the Prophets and the Son of God. Thus John, who had to grow less, was born when the light of day began to decrease; but the Lord was born when the days began to grow longer.

Jerome wrote, This is the literal meaning; however, down to the present time, in the head of John the prophet we see that the Jews killed Christ, who is the head of the prophets. And again the head of the Law, which is Christ, is separated from his own body, which is the Jewish people, and given to a Gentile young lady, that is, to the Roman Church; and the young lady gives [him] to her adulteress mother, meaning the synagogue that will believe in the end. The body of John is buried, and his head is placed on a dish; and the letter lies concealed under the earth; the spirit is honored and received on the altar. . . .

Look now upon John with reverence; see how he prepares his neck at the command of the vile executioner, how he humbly bends his knees, and giving thanks to God he extends his neck, and patiently endures the blow, until his head is completely severed. The holy forerunner of the Lord, who before his face had prepared a baptism in water by baptizing him, and a baptism in tears of repentance by preaching, now prepares a baptism in the blood of the passion by dying. Behold how John approaches, the close friend, the blood relation and the greatest confidant of God. And see how such a great man succumbed to death as if he were a most vile evildoer. O impiety, O cruelty! A just man is beheaded and his head becomes the price paid for a dance; it is carried away in a dish; it is laid before those at table, a

triumphant offering but horrible to look upon! Chrysostom writes: On this day, as the virtue of John and the bestiality of Herod are brought home to us, we are struck in our innermost being, our hearts tremble, our faces blanch, our brains are numbed, our sense of hearing flees. What can our senses accurately report when the enormity of the crimes overshadows the greatness of John's virtues?

John was the cloak of virtue, the teacher of life, the figure of holiness, the measure of justice, the mirror of virginity, the exemplar of modesty, the example of chastity, the way of repentance, pardon for sinners, training in the faith. John, greater than man, equal to the angels, the culmination of the Law, the confirmation of the Gospel, the voice of the Apostles, the silence of the Prophets, the lamp of the world, the forerunner of the Judge, the mediator of Christ, the witness of the Lord, the intermediary of the entire Trinity. And so great a man was handed over to incest: he was handed over to an adulterer; he was awarded to a dancer! It is right that we were struck in our innermost parts, and that our hearts trembled. There is more to say: God was there to support, more generously crowning the just, and greatly lessening the trials of those who afterward suffer unjustly.

Therefore, let those of us listen who are living virtuously but still endure wrongs at the hands of evil men. For truly God sustained him who lived in the wilderness, who wore a loincloth of skin and a rough garment, who was lesser than the Prophet of Prophets; one who had no one greater than he, done to death by a lecherous girl and a corrupt woman of easy virtue, because he defended the divine laws. Therefore, with this in mind, let us manfully bear whatever suffering comes our way.

For who would not be horrified to see before him at the banquet that holy head dripping blood? If hearing these things we are horrified, what effect should this sight have had then? What suffering should those dining have experienced on seeing the dripping blood of the recently severed head in their midst? But neither the wicked Herod nor the woman even more hateful than he nor she who slaked her thirst on blood suffered anything by witnessing this spectacle. These are the words of Chrysostom. And Gregory adds, Not without the gravest wonder do I reflect that this man, filled with the spirit of prophecy while in the womb of his mother and unequalled among the children of women, is cast into prison by the unjust and beheaded as a reward for a girl's dance, and that so great a man should die for the amusement of the corrupt. Could we ever believe that anything had occurred in his life that such a contemptible death would have wiped clean? When did he sin in the matter of food, who only ate locusts and wild honey? When could he have given offense in his dealings with others, when he never left his seclusion? Why is it that almighty God so vehemently

despises in this world those whom he chose in sublime fashion before time began? Only because it is evident to the piety of the faithful that he thus puts them to the test here below because he knows how he will reward them on high. Exteriorly he casts them down to be the object of scorn because he plans to lead them interiorly to things we cannot imagine.

Prayer

O blessed forerunner and loving Baptist, great friend of Jesus, John, brightly shining and warmly burning light, pray to God, the father of mercies, for me in my misery, so that he may brighten and set aflame my dark and cold heart, and that by imitating you for Christ, for faith, for truth, and for justice, I might remain patiently steadfast through adversity, and that I may have no fear to struggle in a manly fashion all my life. Pray too that after this insubstantial life, aided by your favors and prayers on my behalf, I may appear in joy at the royal wedding of the unspotted lamb, whom with your loving finger you have pointed out to the people. Amen.

Primæ Partis Caput LXVI: De decollatione Joannis Baptistæ

(pp. 288-92)

Post hæc autem, imminente paschali festivitate, passio et mors Joannis Baptistæ est subsecuta; et ponitur motivum continens multiplicem culpam. Herodias enim timens ne prædicatione Joannis Herodes pœniteret, et ipsam fratri redderet, cum quo non sine periculo remaneret; ideo cogitavit modum quo interficeretur Joannes absque seditione populi, et Herodes conscius fuit ejusdem doli. Cum igitur Herodes, Tetrarcha, qui aliquando Rex dicitur, non a regia dignitate, sed a regendi officio, diem natalis sui celebraret coram principibus et primis Galilææ, saltavit filia Herodiadæ, id est tripudiavit in medio ut videretur ab omnibus, et hoc fuit ex dispositione matris et Herodis; et placuit Herodi; quod tamen deberet erubescere, quia signum fuit impudicæ filiæ et dissolutæ; et cum juramento pollicitus est ei dare quodcumque ab eo peteret. Secundum Hieronymum, ad hoc forte juravit, ut occasionem apparentem ad occidendum Joannem, et reprimendum populi seditionem haberet, ut videretur facere invitus, quod faciebat spontaneus. At illa præmonita a matre, petit pro munere dari in disco, id est scutella, caput Joannis Baptistæ.

Est enim in hoc loco discus, vas rotundum, desuper extensum. Quandoque etiam mensa inferior discus dicitur, et aliquando mappa seu mensale discus appellatur. Unde et animalia dicuntur Petro apparuisse in disco, qui in Actibus Apostolorum *linteum* vocatur. Unde Chrysostomus: hæc est mulier antiqua malitia, quæ Adam ejecit de Paradisi deliciis, hæc

cœlestes homines fecit terrenos, hæc humanum genus mersit in infernum, hæc vitam abstulit mundo propter unius arboris pomum; hæc malum fecit quod homines inducit ad mortem, hæc invenit verum laborem et pressuram, quæ nunc occidit Baptistam, dejicit puritiam, perdit juventutem, allicit et inquietat mortuam senectutem.

*Et contristatus est rex, simulatorie, non vere, ut postea videretur implere coactus, quod disposuerat facere voluntarius; Dicitur ergo *contristatus*, id est tristari visus, quia secundum Bedam, dissimulator mentis suæ, tristitiam præferebat in facie, cum lætitiam haberet in mente; scelus excusabat juramento, ut sub occasione pietatis magis impius fieret . . . (pp. 288f.).*

Decollatus est autem Joannes, non eo die quo Decollationis ejus celebratur, sed circa dies azymorum Paschæ Judæorum, in anno passionem Christi præcedente, cum jam uno anno stetisset in carcere. Oportuit autem ut propter Dominica sacramenta passionis et resurrectionis Christi, minor, scilicet Joannes cederet majori, scilicet Christo, et ob hoc Decollationis festivitas fuit alio tempore fieri instituta, scilicet eo die quo caput ejus inventum est, sive elevatum. Unde ait Augustinus: Factum est Joanni quod ipse prædixerat. De Domino enim Jesu Christo dixerat: *Illud oportet crescere, me autem minui*. Iste minutus est in capite; ille crevit in cruce. Secundum Gregorium, Decollatio Joannis minorationem famæ illius qua Christus a populo credabatur insinuat, sicut exaltatio Salvatoris in cruce, profectum designabat fidei; quia et ipse qui prius a turbis Prophetæ esse credebatur, Dominus Prophetarum et Dei Filius a cunctis fidelibus est agnitus. Unde Joannes quem oportebat minui, cum diurnum lumen decrescere incepit natus est; Dominus autem eo tempore, quo dies crescere incepit.

Ubi Hieronymus: Hoc juxta litteram factum sit, nos autem usque hodie cernimus in capite Joannis Prophetæ, Judæos Christum, qui caput est Prophetarum perdidisse. Et iterum caput Legis quod est Christus de corpore abscinditur proprio, id est Judaico populo, et datur Gentili puellæ, id est Romanæ Ecclesiæ; et puella dat matri suæ adulteræ, id est synagogæ credituræ in fine. Corpus Joannis sepelitur, caput in disco collocatur; littera humata tegitur, spiritus in altari honoratur et sumitur . . . (p. 289f).

Conspice nunc Joannem reverenter, qualiter ad jussum vilis spiculatoris collum parat, humiliter genua flectit, et gratias Deo agens cervicem extendit, et patienter ictus sustinet, quousque caput totaliter abscindatur. Sanctus ergo Domini præcursor, qui ante faciem ejus Baptismum in aqua præparaverat, baptizando; et Baptismum in lacrymis compunctionis prædicando; modo præparat Baptismum in sanguine passionis moriendo. Ecce quomodo vadit Joannes amicus intimus Domini Jesu, et consanguineus ac Dei maximus secretarius; et qualiter talis et tantus vir, imperante nequitia, ac si esset vilissimus malefactor, occubuit. O impietas, o crudelitas! Justus

decollatur, fit caput ejus pretium saltationis, in disco affertur, convivantibus apponitur, magnum quidem ferculum, sed horribile ad videndum! Unde Chrysostomus: Hodie nobis Joannis virtus, Herodis feritas cum refertur, concussa sunt viscera; corda tremuerunt; caligavit visus; hebuit intellectus; aufugit auditus; aut quid constat in sensibus humanis quando virtutum magnitudinem operit criminum magnitudo.

Joannes stola virtutum, magisterium vitæ, sanctitatis forma, norma justitiæ, virginitatis speculum, pudicitiae titulus, castitatis exemplum, pœnitentiæ via, peccatorum venia, fidei disciplina. Joannes major homine, par Angelis, Legis summa, Evangelii sanctio, Apostolorum vox, silentium Prophetarum, lucerna mundi, præcursor Judicis, Christi mediator, testis Domini, totius medius Trinitatis. Et hic tantus datur incestui, traditur adulteriæ, addicitur saltatrici! Merito ergo concussa sunt viscera, corda tremuerunt. Et iterum: Deus autem sustinuit; et justum amplius coronans, et his qui postea injuste patiuntur, multum derelinquens mitigationem.

Audiamus igitur quicumque in virtute viventes, mala patimur a perniciosis hominibus. Etenim Deus tunc sustinuit eum qui in eremo, eum in zona pellicea, eum qui in cilicino vestimento, eum qui Propheta Prophetarum minor erat, eum qui nullum majorem habebat, occidit a puella incontinenti et corrupta meretice; et hoc leges defendantem divinas. Hæc igitur cogitantes feramus universa viriliter quæcumque patimur.

Quis enim non utique horresceret, sacrum illud caput sanguine stillans, videns in cœna præpositum? Si enim nos audientes hæc horrescimus, quid dignum erat visum illum tunc operari, quid pati eos qui simul recumbent noviter occisi capitis sanguinem stillantem videntes in medio convivii? Sed non iniquus Herodes, neque abominabilius eo mulier, neque sanguinis voratrix illa, passa est aliquid ob spectaculum istud: hæc Chrysostomus. Unde et Gregorius: Non sine admiratione gravissima perpendo quod ille Prophetiæ spiritu intra matris uterum repletus, quo inter natos mulierum nemo major surrexit, ab iniquis in carcerem mittitur, et pro puellæ saltu capite truncatur, et vir tantæ sanctitatis pro risu turpium moritur. Numquid nam credimus aliquid fuisse in ejus vita, quod illa sic despecta mors tergeret? Sed quando ille vel in cibo peccavit, qui locutas solummodo et mel silvestre edit? Quando conversatione sua offendere potuit, qui de eremo non recessit? Quid est quod omnipotens Deus sic vehementer in hoc seculo despicit, quos sic sublimiter ante secula elegit? nisi quod pietati fidelium patet, quoniam idcirco sic eos premit in infimis, quia videt quomodo remuneret in summis; et foras usque ad despectum dejicit quia intus ad incomprehensibilia perducit . . . (p. 290).

Oratio

O beate præcursor et alme Baptista, et magne amice Christi Joannes; lucerna lucens et ardens: ora pro me misero ad Deum patrem misericordiarum, ut cor meum tenebrosum et frigidum illuminet et accendat; et ita ut te imitando pro Christo, pro fide, pro veritate, pro justitia patienter adversa sustineam; et viriliter etiam usque ad mortem certare non timeam: ut post hanc fragilem vitam, tuis meritis et precibus intercedentibus, feliciter pervenire valeam ad regales nuptias immaculati agni, quem tu almo tuo digito populo ostendisti. Amen (p. 292).

Part 2, Chapter 24: Concerning the Anointing of the Head of Jesus

(For the original Latin text, see p. 30.)

And they made a feast there for the Lord and Martha served them; and Lazarus, who had been invited by Simon, was one of those who reclined at table. We must piously believe that the dinner was itself proper and free of luxury, prepared as it was for one who urged and loved moderation. Martha was ministering there, for according to some authorities the house was hers, although occupied by Simon; otherwise she would not have been serving there. Or it could be said that this Simon was a neighbor of Martha, and for this reason she provided service in his house, as people are wont to do in their friends' homes; but especially she acted out of reverence for Christ himself who was dining there. Indeed Lazarus was one of those reclining at table with him, invited by Simon, and this was done to proclaim the truth of the miracle of his restoration to life. The sight of Lazarus taking nourishment would demonstrate that his revival was not imaginary. And so wrote Augustine: Lest people think that he had become a phantasm because he rose from the dead, Lazarus was one of those reclining at table. He was alive, he spoke, he partook of the feast: truth was made evident and the faithlessness of the Jews was confounded.

Likewise, according to Augustine, while Lazarus reclined at dinner, in reply to his companions' questions, he gave an orderly account of the places of grief, and the abode of punishment hidden in darkest night. And so the dinner guests found one who could reveal the secrets of the lower regions, which had remained so long unknown. . . .

Mary therefore approached Jesus as if she were approaching a fountain of mercy that washes away our infirmities; and she broke, opened, that is, an alabaster container filled with precious oil of nard—a small vessel of alabaster, that is, a jar of alabaster (a kind of pure white marble shot

through with various colors, in which oils are well preserved against spoilage), filled with precious ointment. She then poured the oil over his head as he reclined or, as we would say, sat at table, just as one would pour out rose water to provide refreshment and fragrance. And then Mary anointed his feet, at which she had under other circumstances found such grace, and she dried them with her hair. The order in which these things happened was different from that in which they are recounted; for first she washed his feet, dried them with her hair, and only then anointed them with oil. And the house was filled with the odor of the oil, for it was an aromatic substance and its fragrance could be diffused far and wide.

It is not likely that this oil would be something thick and crude, like the unguents that are commonly known by that name, for it would be unseemly to pour such a substance over the head of one sitting at table. Therefore we must say that what is here called "oil" is a precious liquid pressed from an aromatic substance, just as rose water is pressed from roses. Some say that the oil was a "tear" flowing naturally from an aromatic tree; this exuded liquid was most precious and possessed many medicinal properties. Others say that nard is a black plant forming spikes on its tips, and for this reason where John writes "spikenard," Mark has "pointed nard"; for from these points is skillfully extracted the above-mentioned liquid or, as others would have it, the liquid flows out naturally. Others maintain that nard is a small, bushy tree, and that the liquid flows or is extracted in the manner described above.

"Pistici," according to some, is the name of a place where the tree grows from which the liquid is extracted; but it is more accurate to say that *pistici* means "faithful" (the Greek *πιστικός* means the same as *fides* in Latin [and "faith" in English]). This interpretation indicates that the liquid is genuine and pure, with nothing added to it, and not an artificial concoction. The oil was precious, since it cost three hundred denarii (these were the ordinary coins in circulation at that time). This oil brought refreshment and comfort to the parts of the body; it bestowed strength, had a pleasant aroma, and helped alleviate the effects of the sun's heat and the harshness of the climate; moreover, it possessed many medicinal properties as well. All this demonstrates how precious the oil was and underscores the devotion and piety of Mary, who taking pity on the labors of Christ, anointed his feet and head, thereby pouring forth such a precious substance in devotion to him. We are taught through this account to offer to God those things that are most precious to us. . . .

The house was filled with the odor: the world is filled with a good repute, for the good odor is a good repute. Those who are called Christians but live wickedly do harm to Christ; and about them it is said that through

them the name of God is blasphemed. And if through these the name of God is blasphemed, then through those who are good the name of God is praised. Harken to the Apostle: We are the good odor of Christ, he says, in every place. It is also written in the Canticle of Canticles, Thy name is an oil poured out. Thus far Augustine. Here is what Bede says: The devotion of Mary ministering to the Lord connotes, in a mystical sense, the faith and devotion of the Holy Church, who speaks thus in the Canticle of love, While the king reclined on his couch, my spikenard gave forth its scent. And these words the Church once surely fulfilled in the literal sense through the hands of Mary; and daily it does not cease to fulfil them spiritually in all its members, who, spread throughout the entire world, exult and say, Thanks be to God, who always causes us to triumph in Jesus Christ, and manifests through us the odor of his fame in every place, for we are the good odor of Christ for God. Whosoever with due reverence confesses the power of his divine virtue, which is his along with the Father, who praises, and declares it openly—such a one in truth poured a precious oil on his head. When, indeed, anyone acknowledges the mysteries of the humanity that Christ has taken on, paying them the same measure of reverence, such a one poured the faithful and true spikenard on the feet of the Lord. Persons of this type, by their devout preaching, declare and by their acts of pious worship honor the nature of Christ whereby he deigned to come into contact with the earth, that is to say, to associate with humankind. The house was filled with the odor of the oil, which indicates that the odor of the holiness of Christ has filled the Church; all hasten toward this odor. . . .

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, when about to suffer for the entire world, you wished to come and to remain in Bethany (which means “the house of obedience”) and dine there, and you permitted your head and feet to be anointed. Grant that by remaining in true obedience, I may deserve to provide a spiritual banquet for you through it, because you take pleasure in and in a certain sense are nourished by our obedience. Cause me at the same time to anoint your head and feet: confessing the power of your divine virtue with worthy reverence and praise as I anoint your head; and, as I anoint your feet, acknowledging the mysteries of the human form you have taken. Or again, let me anoint your head as I venerate you as Christ, and your feet while I serve those who are faithful to you. In doing this, may I gain your grace. Amen.

Secundæ Partis Caput XXIV: De effusione unguenti super caput Jesu

(pp. 479–86)

Fecereunt autem cœnam ibi Domino; et Martha ministrabat et Lazarus, invitatus a Simone, unus discumbentium erat. Pie credendum est quod cœna honesta et absque luxu fuerit, quam fecerunt ei qui prædicator et amator parcimoniae extitit. Martha ministrabat ibi, quia secundum quosdam, domus Marthæ possessione, sed Simonis habitatione, alias ibi non ministrasset; vel, potest dici, quod iste Simon erat Marthæ vicinus, et propter hoc ipsa ministrabat in domo ejus, sicut homines solent facere in domibus amicorum suorum, et maxime propter reverentiam ipsius Christi comedentis ibidem. Lazarus vero erat unus ex discubentibus cum eo, invitatus a Simone, et hoc factum est ad declarationem veri miraculi de ejus resuscitatione, ut ex hoc quod post suscitationem cibum sumeret, non phantastica sua resuscitatio esse probaretur. Unde Augustinus: Ne putarent homines phantasma esse factum, quia mortuus surrexit, Lazarus unus erat ex recubentibus, vivebat; loquebatur, epulabatur; veritas ostendebatur, infidelitas Judæorum confundebatur.

Et secundum eumdem, Lazarus dum discubbit in convivio, convivis interrogantibus eum tristia loca, pœnarumque sedes alta nocte obscuras, indicavit diligenti narratione per ordinem; et ita inferi, longis temporibus ignorati, tandem invenerunt proditorem . . . (p. 486).

Maria ergo accessit ad Jesum, tamquam ad fontem misericordiæ lavantem infirmitates nostras; et fregit, id est, aperuit alabastrum contentivum, unguenti nardi pistici pretiosi, id est, vasculum alabastrinum, scilicet pixidem de alabastro, quod est genus marmoris candidi, et variis coloribus intertincti, in quo bene et incorrupte servantur unguenta, plenum unguento pretioso; et effudit unguentum super caput ipsius recubentis, id est ad mensam sedentis, sicut effunditur aqua rosacea propter refrigerium et odorem; et enim unxit inde pedes ejus, apud quos etiam alias tantam gratiam invenerat, et capillis suis extersit. Ordine alio factum fuit quam hic scriptum est: quia primo lavit pedes et extersit, et postea unxit. Et domus impleta est ex odore unguenti effusi; quia enim de re aromatica erat, longe lateque poterat odor ejus diffundi.

Non est verisimile quod esset grossum sicut unguenta communiter dicta; quia indecens esset tale quid ponere super caput hominis sedentis in mensa, et ideo dicendum quod hic vocatur unguentum liquor pretiosus de re aromatica expressus, sicut aqua rosacea exprimitur de rosis. Aliqui dicunt quod fuit lacryma fluens naturaliter de arbore aromatica quæ est multum pretiosa, et valet ad multa medicinalia. Dicunt etiam aliqui, quod nardus est

herba nigra, faciens spicas in cacumine, et propter hoc, ubi Joannes dicit *nardum pisticum*, Marcus habet *nardum spicatum*, quia de illis spicis extrahitur liquor prædictus per artificium, vel, secundum alios, fluit per naturam. Alii vero dicunt, quod est frutex arbor parvula, et inde fluit vel extrahitur liquor modo prædicto.

Pistici, secundum quosdam, nomen est loci ubi crescit arbor unde talis liquor exprimitur; sed melius dicitur *pistici*, id est fidelis, πιστις enim Græce, fides est Latine, hoc est dictum, quod iste liquor erat purus et verus, non habens aliquid aliud admixtum, nec sophisticatus; *pretiosi*, quia valebat trecentos denarios, id est nummos usuales, erat enim ille liquor refrigerativus et confortativus membrorum, et consolidativus, et valde odoriferus, valens ad alleviationem laboris contra æstum solis, et distemperiem aeris, et ad multa medicinalia. Ex quo patet pretiositas unguenti, et devotio ac pietas Mariæ, quæ labori Christi compatiens, et pedes et caput ejus unxit; et rem tam pretiosam in obsequium ejus expendit. In quo et nos docemur quod ea quæ pretiosissima sunt apud nos, Deo offerre debemus . . . (pp. 482f.).

Domus autem impleta odore; mundus impletus est bona fama. Nam odor bonus, bona fama est. Qui male vivunt et Christiani vocantur, injuriam Christo faciunt. De quibus dictum est, quod per eos nomen Dei blasphematur. Si per tales nomen Dei blasphematur, per bonos nomen Dei laudatur. Audi Apostolum: Christi bonus odor sumus, inquit, in omni loco. Dicitur et in Canticis Canticorum: Unguentum effusum nomen tuum: hæc Augustinus. Ubi et Beda: Mystice autem hæc devotio Mariæ Domino ministrantis, fidem ac pietatem designat Ecclesiæ sanctæ, quæ loquitur in amoris Cantico, dicens, Dum esset rex in accubitu suo, nardus mea dedit odorem suum. Quæ nimirum verba, et semel juxta litteram manibus Mariæ complevit, et quotidie in omnibus suis membris, spiritualiter implere non desinit, quæ toto diffusa orbe gloriantur, et dicunt, Deo autem gratias qui semper triumphat nos in Christo Jesu, et odorem notitiæ suæ manifestat per nos in omni loco, quia Christi bonus odor sumus Deo. Quicumque potentiam divinæ virtutis ejus, quæ illi una cum Patre est, digna reverentia confitetur, laudat, et prædicat, caput profecto illius unguento perfudit pretioso. Cum vero assumptæ mysteria humanitatis æque digna reverentia suscipit, in pedes utique Domini unguentum nardi pisticum, id est fidele, ac verum perfudit, qui illam ejus naturam qua terram contingere, hoc est inter homines conversari dignatus est, pia prædicatione commendat ac devotis veneratur obsequiis. Domus autem impleta est ex odore unguenti, quod significat odorem sanctitatis Christi implesse Ecclesiam, ad quem odorem omnes festinant . . . (p. 483).

Oratio

Domine Jesu Christe, qui pro omni mundo passurus venire et morari in Bethania, id est domo obedientiæ, et ibidem cœnare voluisti, ac caput et pedes tibi ungi permisisti: da mihi ut in vera obedientia perseverando, per hanc tibi refectionem facere merear spiritualem, quia tu in nostra delectaris, et quodammodo pasceris obedientia. Fac etiam me ibidem caput tuum, et pedes ungere: caput quidem, divinæ virtutis tuæ potentiam digna reverentia et laude confitendo, pedes vero, assumptæ humanitatis mysteria similiter digne suscipiendo; vel caput, te Christum venerando, et pedes, tuis fidelibus obsequendo: ut tuam gratiam consequar sic agendo. Amen (p. 486).



SOURCES

Counsels of Our Father St. Ignatius regarding Conversation

Whether St. Ignatius actually said what is printed in "Sources" here is not as important for the history of Jesuit spirituality as that these sayings are attributed to Ignatius. Beginning in the late sixteenth, throughout the seventeenth, and into the eighteenth century, various publications both within and outside the Society quoted these and similar sayings and cited Ignatius as their source. The ensemble of these works helped portray for many both the personality of Ignatius and the characteristics of Ignatian spirituality. Meanwhile, of course, primary sources, including the autobiography itself of Ignatius and his spiritual diary, remained almost completely unknown, resting on the shelves of the Jesuit archives in Rome.

The best known of all such works is *Scintillæ Ignatianæ . . .*, first published in 1705 by Gabriel Hevenesi, S.J. It is a compilation of apothegms or remarks (supposedly made) by Ignatius, arranged for each day of the year. It went through more than forty editions in Latin over two hundred years, the latest of them in 1919, and appeared in many translations. An English version came out as recently as 1928 in a little book entitled *Thoughts of Saint Ignatius of Loyola for Every Day of the Year*. A future issue of *STUDIES* will reproduce some of those *Scintillæ* (sparks or, in later Latin, brief extracts from someone's writings) in "Sources."

The present text comes from an earlier book, *Via vitæ æternæ* (*The way of eternal life*) published in 1620 by Antoine Sucquet (1574–1626), a member of the Flemish Belgian Province. Sucquet, who died at the age of 51, crowded into a short life a great variety of accomplishments. He attended Jesuit schools in Maastricht and Louvain, studied law for five years, practiced that profession for some time, and then entered the novitiate in 1597. Ten years later he was ordained and in rapid order became master of novices at Antwerp (1609) and Mechlin (1611) and founder of the Jesuit school in the latter city. Among his novices was St. John Berchmans. In 1617 he became rector of the Jesuit college in Brussels. (Archives still preserve the receipts signed by Rubens for payment by Sucquet for the two portraits of Ignatius and Francis Xavier for the Jesuit church there.) In 1619 Sucquet became provincial of the Flemish Belgian Province and then rector and master of novices once again at Mechlin. He died in Paris in 1626 on his way back from a procurators' congregation in Rome.

The *Via vitæ æternæ*, illustrated by thirty-two engravings, was Sucquet's most important work. It went through at least nine Latin editions and translations into Flemish, French, German, Spanish, Hungarian, Polish, and English, and excerpts appeared as various other separate volumes. It is a good example of the kind of practical spiritual handbook that Jesuits wrote in the generalates of Claudio Acquaviva and Muzio Vitelleschi, in such profusion that the latter once remarked on the "cacoethes scribendi," the itch to write, that Jesuits possessed. It is made up of reflections and exercises on subjects drawn heavily from the Spiritual Exercises and illustrated by examples, allegories, and commentaries drawn from Scripture and from a variety of earlier writers on the Christian life.

*The excerpt published here, translated by the late Martin Palmer, S.J., from the 1625 Antwerp French edition of *Via vitæ æternæ* is taken from chapter 18, devoted to "modestia" or appropriate rules of conduct.*

JWP, SJ

1. He advised avoiding any sort of argument in conversation. He said he would rather attain a single step forward for the neighbor without arguing than many steps by means of arguing.

2. He advised contenting everyone. For nothing, no matter how precious, can repair the damage done by wounding charity. Hence, we must patiently bear contradiction and opposition in conversation and put up with long and irrelevant speeches.

3. He wanted us to ask the people we deal with for a space of time in which to dispatch any business on their behalf, and after receiving it to accomplish the thing ahead of the agreed-upon time.

4. He admonished us always to speak in such a manner and with such circumspection as if we expected our hearers to publish abroad what we say.

5. He said we should speak little, and after others have finished speaking—but conversely, that we should patiently hear out long speeches from other people.

6. He urged us all to adapt ourselves, for the love of God, to our neighbor's character—avoiding a dour demeanor with a person who is cheerful and exuberant, being kindly with one who is sad and melancholy, speaking vivaciously with one who is vehement. Just as the enemy, he said, enters with what is not his own and leaves with what is—for he enters without opposing the manners of the person he wants to win, even suggesting some good

thoughts to him in order to stuff him with different thoughts that are in appearance good but in reality not, thus ending up with what he wants and achieving his purpose—in the same way we should first show approval of whatever is good in our neighbor, and then gently go about correcting whatever needs correction.

7. He said that we should never part with a person we desire to lead back to a good life, leaving him upset or unhappy.

8. That we must adapt ourselves to others' limitations so far as our Institute allows; thus, we must make ourselves all things to all.

9. We should not move straight to what is highest and most perfect, but proceed slowly and gently, from lower things to higher.

10. We must above all adapt ourselves to people's capacities. Try to pour too much at once into a narrow-necked bottle, and you will just spill it and fail to get it inside.

11. He added that we should take care that people not observe in us any vice or fault, such as excess in eating or drinking, exaggeration in speech, vanities, petty quibbling, uncontrolled movements or gestures. These things lessen people's esteem for us and alienate them. Hence he used to require a certain harmony and order in every detail in the outward appearance of a man who deals with others, as a visible sign of a well-ordered soul.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

November 26, 1997

Editor:

Jim Keenan's "Are *Informationes* Ethical?" (STUDIES 29, no. 5 (Nov. 1997) arrived just yesterday, so I apologize for the lateness of this response. Because mail arrives late, however, it is all the more appreciated here, and issues of STUDIES are devoured rapidly. This morning in class, which was about "Mission" in the Constitutions and Norms, I was asked, probably at Jim's suggestion, "Does our mission to promote justice include the Society itself?"

Grateful as I am to Jim for raising such questions—some of which had already surfaced in our classes about fraternal correction—I wish he had restricted certain of his judgments to "scholastics" properly so called and had not broadened these judgments to include novices.

For instance, Keenan says on pp. 16 and 17 that the novice director ought not be the spiritual director. This argument is more valid for approved scholastics in their dealings with superiors than it is for novices dealing with the novice master. If a novice master is not both a spiritual director and an evaluator, what is he? Speaking for myself, I would not want to undertake an evaluation for admission to first vows without any of the

access to a man's prayer that spiritual direction gives.

The long retreat provides a case in point. It is one of the key moments in spiritual direction for the novice—actually the key moment. For the Constitutions list it as the novice's first test, and it is also, in my experience, the occasion for many a confidential revelation. Is the novice master to be excluded, even in principle, from this experiment? Or, after guiding a man through the retreat, must he then withhold judgment on his admission to vows?

In any event, with our twenty-one novices, we do not have enough staff to separate the role of novice master from that of spiritual director. Of course, if a young New Yorker like Jim Keenan were to volunteer for this novitiate, he would be "welcome," as we say in Nigeria, and our arrangements might be more in accord with the ethical norms he recommends. He could be the "superior who leads and decides" (p. 17). I could do the essential work of spiritual direction and the long retreat.

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